

## on the COVER



Kids of all ages get close to nature boating on the Loxahatchee River

The District Reference Center houses a library of scientific and engineering documents

Environmental scientists regularly speak at conferences about ecosystem restoration progress

Vegetation managers coordinate prescribed burns to maintain and encourage native plant communities

Service Center biologists monitor local environmental resource permits

## Strategic Plan Outlines Clear Direction for Next 10 Years



“The staff of this agency share the Governing Board’s passion and commitment to leave a lasting, positive imprint on South Florida’s future.”

– HENRY DEAN  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This year, I’m happy to begin my 21st year as the Executive Director of a regional water management district – after 17 years at the helm of the St. Johns River and three years here in South Florida.

Reaching that 20-year milestone, I reflected back on the many amazing changes and tremendous growth I’ve seen this state go through during that time. It reminded me of the reason many of us have dedicated our careers to the field of resource management.

What drives us? We want to exceed public expectations and we want to make a difference in the Florida of tomorrow. We are working to make sure that clean water is available for the environment and for people; that wetlands are protected; that our homes and businesses are protected from floods; and that natural systems are restored and preserved.

To ensure that the South Florida Water Management District remains focused on those important stewardship goals, the Governing Board and staff undertook a major effort to develop a 10-year Strategic Plan designed to move us forward... and to keep us on track.

Not created to merely sit on a shelf, this is a living, breathing document. It is a legible and clear roadmap that captures the essence of what we are responsible for accomplishing and what we need to do to get it done. It provides the staff and the public we serve with specific direction, an understanding of agency priorities, and the success indicators we will use to measure our progress.

As part of this process, we have organized the District’s broad mission into 10 distinct, though interrelated and interdependent, programs: Coastal Watersheds, Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan, District Everglades, Kissimmee Restoration, Lake Okeechobee, Land Stewardship, Operations and Maintenance, Regulation, Water Supply and Mission Support. The Strategic Plan includes specific implementation and evaluation strategies for all programs.

In addition, the Governing

Board has identified seven key priorities for increased budget and resource consideration in order to expedite implementation. (See box) Designed to be a dynamic process, the Strategic Plan will be reviewed every year and the priorities will also be reexamined. Some will be accomplished, new ones may be added and others may be revised based on a variety of factors.

The staff of this agency share the Governing Board’s passion and commitment to leave a lasting, positive imprint on South Florida’s future. With the assistance and support of our public and private partners, we expect to continue our role as pioneers and global leaders in the world of resource management and ecosystem restoration.

With the 10-year Strategic Plan as our guide, we look forward to the challenges and opportunities ahead!

### Strategic Priorities

- Build three reservoirs to increase storage capacity
- Achieve Everglades water quality standards
- Acquire land for Kissimmee River restoration
- Reduce Lake Okeechobee phosphorus inputs
- Refurbish the regional water management system
- Implement water supply plan recommendations
- Recognize the value of our employees



Call 1-800-432-2045 or visit us at [www.sfwmd.gov](http://www.sfwmd.gov) for a copy of the Strategic Plan.

## Everglades Progress

• **Indian River Lagoon:** On May 7, the Indian River Lagoon South Restoration Project Implementation Report (recommended plan) was published in the Federal Register, Washington, D.C., for public comment as well as comments by state and federal agencies. Based on comments received, The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the South Florida Water Management District will prepare a Chief of Engineers’ report. The Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works will conduct the final review. Once finalized, the report will be submitted to Congress for authorization under a future Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) – projected for late summer or early fall – making it the first Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan project to be submitted for congressional authorization.

• **Everglades Agricultural Area Storage Reservoir:** In late April, U.S. Sugar Corp. agreed to vacate leased, state-owned land (former Talisman Sugar Co. property) just south of Lake Okeechobee, allowing the South Florida Water Management District to expedite work on a massive reservoir and stormwater treatment areas, with the first 17,000-acre phase expected to be completed by 2009. Construction of the Everglades Agricultural Area Storage Reservoir is one of the agency’s top priorities.

• **Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) Pilot Projects:** The Draft Pilot Project Design Report and Draft Environmental Impact Statement, decision-making documents for engineering options for the Lake Okeechobee, Hillsboro and Caloosahatchee ASR Pilot Project field tests, were released May 7 for public review and comment. These tests and other evaluations are required before the District and the Corps can determine the feasibility of full-scale implementation of ASR technology as proposed in the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan.

To view the reports or for additional information about these and other Everglades restoration projects, visit [www.evergladesplan.org](http://www.evergladesplan.org)



The Indian River Lagoon South Restoration Project nears congressional authorization, which will benefit the health of the region’s water bodies.



Nicolás J. Gutiérrez, Jr.



Harkley R. Thornton

## Two Governing Board Members Reappointed

Governor Jeb Bush has reappointed two South Florida Water Management District Governing Board members: Nicolás J. Gutiérrez, Jr. and Harkley R. Thornton. Both were sworn in at the April 14 Governing Board meeting and will serve four-year terms effective March 2004 to February 2008.

Governing Board Chair Nicolás J. Gutiérrez, Jr. is a founding partner of the business law firm of Borgognoni & Gutiérrez, L.L.P. in Miami. He was reappointed to serve a third term on the Governing Board. Originally appointed in 1999, he was first elected Chair of the nine-member Board in March of 2001 and then again in March of 2003. Gutiérrez has extensive experience in government relations, corporate law and asset control regulatory matters, and serves on numerous professional, business and service organizations. His area of representation is Miami-Dade County.

Governing Board Member Harkley R. Thornton is owner and president of Outlook Media Inc. in Orlando. He was also reappointed to serve a third term on the Governing Board. Thornton is active in numerous business and community organizations such as the Kissimmee/Osceola Chamber of Commerce and is a trustee of the Foundation for Osceola Education. He has served as Chair of the Human Resources Committee of the Governing Board and currently is Chair of the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes Management Advisory Committee. His area of representation is Glades, Highlands, Okeechobee, Orange, Osceola and Polk counties.